

THE BUSAN DAILY No 4

Hollywood REPORTER

THR.COM/BUSAN

OCTOBER 7, 2013



STILL LIFE

by Uberto Pasolini



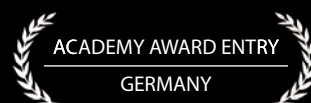
MARKET SCREENING

Tue | Oct 8 | 10:00 am | Lotte Cinema 8



TWO LIVES

by Georg Maas



MARKET SCREENING

Wed | Oct 9 | 10:00 am | CGV Cine de Chef A



LE GRAND CAHIER



Fri | Oct 4 | 16:00 | Lotte Cinema Centum City 4
Sun | Oct 6 | 16:00 | Lotte Cinema Centum City 3
Fri | Oct 11 | 16:00 | CGV Centum City 4



CHILD'S POSE



Mon | Oct 07 | 10:00 | CGV Centum City Starium
Fri | Oct 11 | 20:00 | Cinema 1

THE *Hollywood* REPORTER

OCTOBER 7, 2013 | BUSAN | No. 4
THR.COM/BUSAN

BUSAN
WEATHER
AND HIGH
TEMPS

TODAY
81° F
27° C



TOMORROW
78° F
26° C



South Korea Taps China Film Boom

By Lee Hyo-won

Long before the Chinese market boom began attracting the global film industry's attention, South Korean entertainment giant CJ Entertainment had a head start in launching the country's largest cinema chain,

CGV, there. In the seven years since debuting with the Daning location in

Shanghai in 2006, CGV now operates 20 multiplex theaters with 151 screens in 13 cities including Beijing, Wuhan, and Tianjin.

Currently there are some 3,200 theaters across the Asian country, while the number of Chinese theatergoers, which was 190 million last year, is expected to surpass 290 million by 2014. Riding in on the expansion, CGV has opened nine new multiplexes this year alone, and plans to set up seven more by the end of the year to eventually have 100 theaters by 2016.

According to Chinese research firm EntGroup, CGV ranked 18th (1.6 percent of box office market share) among local movie theater operators as of June 2013, up from 22nd (1.2 percent) in December 2012. Last year's sales revenue of \$41 million is expected to double this year, passing

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

WORLD PREMIERE



Transit

Hannah Espia's directorial debut — and Philippine Oscar entry — effectively chronicles the lives of five Filipinos adapting to life in Israel BY CLARENCE TSUI

One of the most memorable conversations in the Israel-set migrant-worker drama *Transit* involves a group of Filipino domestic workers talking about how their offspring's minds are shaped growing up as aliens in a foreign land. In order to conceal their illegitimate-resident status children grow up being taught to lie and hide so as to avoid deportation back to the Philippines.

This unnerving revelation is an illustration of the strongest suit of Hannah Espia's directorial debut. Working through the lives of five Filipinos (or four and a half, as one of them was born with Israeli blood) living in Tel Aviv, *Transit* — freshly anointed as the Philippines' official submission for the foreign

language Oscar — is at its most powerful when it touches on the lives of the confused youngsters who find themselves living in the shadow of their parents' anxiety and caught in between conflicting identities.

Eschewing a linear approach, *Transit* zeroes in on how her five protagonists experience more or less the same period in time, with certain scenes repeated from a different angle so as to focus on how they react to reality from varying perspectives. But before the youngsters' tales take over, *Transit* still has to set the scene with the time-honored accounts of Filipino laborers struggling abroad. First off is Janet (Irma Adlawan), Yael's domestic-helper mother whose comparatively calm

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

OPENING DOORS



meet the european film industry

at the Asian Film Market
October 7-10, 2013

EUROPE'S UMBRELLA STAND F23
at BEXCO (Centum area)

Austria
EastWest Filmdistribution

Ireland
Irish Film Board

Denmark
TrustNordisk
LevelK

Italy
Fandango
Intramovies
Istituto Luce-Cinecittà

France
Bac Films Distribution
Capricci
Celluloid Dreams
Doc & Film International
Films Distribution
Gaumont
Kinology
Le Pacte
Les Films du Losange
Memento Films
Premium Films
REEL SUSPECTS
uniFrance films
Urban Distribution International
Versatile
Wide House
WIDE
Wild Bunch

Poland
New Europe Film Sales

Serbia
Film Center Serbia

Spain
Film Factory Entertainment
Latido

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Swedish Film Institute

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Swiss Films

Germany
Beta Cinema
Films Boutique
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China

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

\$91 million (100 billion won). Korea's Shinhan Investment forecasts that CGV will begin making major leaps in profits by 2015, and increased the company's target stock price from \$64.37 (70,000 won) to \$67.13 (73,000 won).

"In a market where you need to compete against piracy and scores of other theater companies, we are trying to distinguish ourselves with culturally inclined, technologically advanced services," says **Im Hyeong-gon**, head of CGV's Global Business Center.

Multiplexes feature Korean restaurant and café chains, IMAX screens, seats equipped with Beats by Dr. Dre headsets, and 4DX technology — the latter being climate-controlled rooms with seats that jerk back and forth while emitting scents, winds, and even water, in sync with the onscreen action.

In addition to the theater business, Korean talent and

technology are reaching out to China's abundant capital and market size through co-produced films. Korean companies have enjoyed greater success than their U.S. counterparts, and have led the pack in entering the Chinese industry.

Mr. Go, by Korea's Showbox/Mediaplex and China's Huayi Brothers, stars Chinese actress **Xu Jiao** among a Korean cast/crew, and includes a CGI gorilla created by Korean VFX studio Dexter Film. It brought in \$16.73 million (18.2 billion won) in China, or twice as much as in Korea (\$8.46 million or 9.2 billion won).

"The Korean film market needs to expand. It's important to touch upon shared human emotions in telling stories through movies, and this is a must for really globalizing Korean cinema. Working with China is the best way to make my dreams as a filmmaker come true," says the film's director



Korean exhibitor CGV operates 20 multiplexes in China.

Kim Yong-hwa.

Bunshinsaba 2, also featuring a Korean cast/crew, was the highest grossing Chinese-produced horror film on the mainland. *A Wedding Invitation*, a CJ production distributed by China Film Group, was another box-office success. Earlier this year China Film Group and Pegasus & Taihe Entertainment announced plans to invest \$20 million in *The Fist*, the largest ever Korea-China co-production to be directed by Korean filmmaker **Park Kwang-hyun**.

In order to facilitate such joint ventures between the two industries, the state-run Korean Film Council (KOFIC) opened in April the Korean Film Business Cen-

ter in Beijing and sponsors meetings between Korean industry players and Chinese producers. v "The focus right now is China. China has an incredible market but lacks content, such as VFX as well as original scripts due to censorship issues. So this is where Korea steps in," says **Kim Young-gu**, manager of KOFIC's International Coproduction Team.

Meanwhile, cooperation is taking place on a governmental level to make sure these co-productions are widely shown across both Chinese and Korean theaters. The two countries' culture ministries inked a pact that would recognize joint ventures as homegrown movies in both countries, thus ensuring that they will benefit from respective local policies for protecting domestic works. **THR**

Jim Sheridan: 'We're in a Transitional Period for Cinema'

By Clifford Coonan

Irish director **Jim Sheridan** hailed the role of the Busan International Film Festival in supporting independent cinema, but said technological changes provided a major challenge for filmmakers.

"Each industrial advance simplifies the medium and makes it, in some ways, less interesting. If I go on the Internet now I can get my films for free ... There is the tsunami of the modern Internet which me and the Directors' Guild try to fight," said the director of *My Left Foot* and *In The Name of the Father*.

Sheridan was part of a panel of Irish directors spearheading a pro-



From left: Lance Daly, Neil Jordan, Jim Sheridan, John Butler and Brendan Muldowney

motion from Ireland at the festival, including *The Crying Game* director **Neil Jordan**, and emerging filmmakers **Lance Daly** (*Life's a Breeze*), **Brendan Muldowney** (*Love Eternal*) and **John Butler** (*The Stag*).

While in Busan, Sheridan will give a master class and was chosen for a hand-printing event which celebrates a filmmaker's career.

A total of 11 films by Irish filmmakers have been chosen for Rogues, Rebels and Romantics: A Season of

Irish Cinema.

"We are in a transition period for cinema worldwide and what happened to the music industry seems to be happening in the cinema," he told the panel, which was moderated by **Jay Jeon**, deputy festival director.

"I think Hollywood is making movies for China and India and Brazil and Russia so they don't want dialogue movies, they don't want to try. They migrate the dramas to the TV ... film festivals like this are a lifeline for independent cinema," said Sheridan.

Jordan said the environment for Irish cinema was different from previously.

"In the present climate it's very difficult to get distribution for an Irish movie. I've written an erotic ghost story set in Eastern Europe. I hope to make that in the New Year," said Jordan, who also directed *Interview with a Vampire* and *Michael Collins*. **THR**

2013 BUSAN

TAIWAN CINEMA

BEXCO, Exhibition hall 1

Booth:F01

Open Cinema

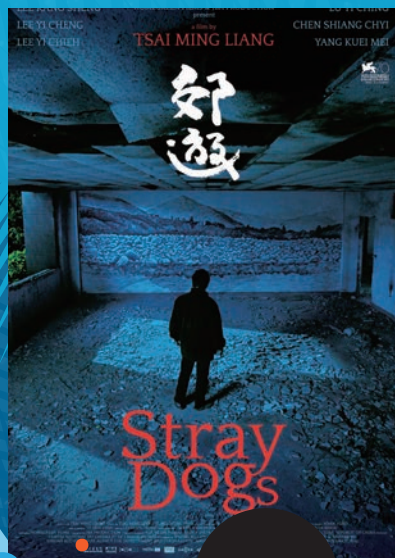
Zone Pro Site : The Moveable Feast

by CHEN YU-HSUN

2013-10-09 20:00 BIFF Theatre

2013-10-10 13:00 CGV Centum City Starium

2013-10-11 20:00 M7 : Megabox Haeundae 7



A Window on Asian Cinema

A Time in Quchi

by CHANG TSO-CHI

2013-10-05 10:00 Megabox Haeundae 1&2

2013-10-06 19:00 Lotte Cinema Centum City 9

2013-10-10 16:00 Lotte Cinema Centum City 9

Soul

by CHUNG Mong-Hong

2013-10-04 13:00 Haneulyeon Theater

2013-10-07 13:00 Megabox Haeundae 6

2013-10-08 14:00 CGV Centum City 7

Stray Dogs

by TSAI MING LIANG

2013-10-07 16:00 Haneulyeon Theater

2013-10-10 14:00 Haneulyeon Theater

2013-10-11 16:00 Megabox Haeundae 1&2

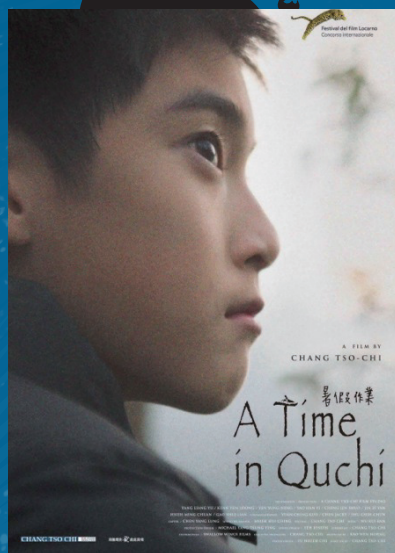
Taipei Factory

by Singing Chen, Jéro Yun, Midi Z, Joana Preiss,
Shen Ko-shang, Luis Cifuentes,
Chang Jung-chi, Alireza Khatami

2013-10-05 19:00 Megabox Haeundae 1&2

2013-10-08 19:00 Megabox Haeundae

2013-10-11 19:00 Megabox Haeundae



Market Screening

Apolitical Romance

by HSIEH Chun-yi

2013-10-07 15:30 LOTTE CINEMA Centum City 8

Battle Spirit

by Peter TANG

2013-10-09 15:30 CGV Cine de Chef A

Forever Love

by Toyoharu Kitamura / Shiao Li-shiou

2013-10-08 15:00 LOTTE CINEMA Centum City Charlotte

Get Together

by LU Chin-cheng

2013-10-08 12:30 CGV Cine de Chef A

The Harbor

by Justin S. CHOU

2013-10-08 18:30 LOTTE CINEMA Centum City 2

Zone Pro Site: The Moveable Feast

by CHEN YU-HSUN

2013-10-07 17:30 LOTTE CINEMA Centum City 10

2013-10-08 17:30 LOTTE CINEMA Centum City 10

TAIPEI
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台北市電影委員會



文化部
MINISTRY OF CULTURE

ASIA IN BRIEF

OLIVER STONE IN JEJU

Visitors to the Busan International Film Festival were given leaflets protesting against plans to build a U.S. naval base on South Korea's Jeju Island, with **Oliver Stone** prominent among those opposing the construction of the base. *The Wall Street* and *Platoon* director is opposed to American plans to establish its 'Asian Pivot' in the region, which will see 60 percent of American naval assets moved to the Pacific by the end of the decade.

CHINA HAS AN ARMY OF WEB MONITORS

Around two million "online public opinion monitors" in various government departments and companies are employed by the Chinese authorities to monitor web activity on social media. The army of net nannies hail from the propaganda departments of the Communist Party, commercial institutions and other agencies, the Beijing News reported this week. China has more than 591 million Internet users and routinely censors the web by blocking access to sites with pornography, gambling and content critical of the Communist Party's rule.

PHILIPPINE OSCAR SPAT

Late last month, the Film Academy of the Philippines, headed by director **Peque Gallaga**, announced that director **Hannah Espia**'s immigration drama *Transit* would be the country's official submission for the foreign language Oscar. Many were surprised by the decision, as **Erik Matti**'s *On the Job* was perceived as the frontrunner. Matti took to the airwaves to say he believed local senators had urged the committee to vote against his thriller, while insiders say a long-running personal beef between Matti and Gallaga was the true cause of the snub. **THR**



The Spy: Undercover Operation



The Fake



The Pirates

BIFF Market

5 Market Titles to Watch Out For

By Lee Hyo-won

The Fake

Director Yeon Sangho

Cast Yang Ikjune and Oh Jungse (voices)

Following his debut feature *The King of Pigs*, which screened in Busan last year as well as Cannes in the Director's Fortnight sidebar where it received the NETPAC Award, Yeon Sangho is back with another decidedly noir adult animation. This time a swindler named Choi dupes a local village out of their savings by founding a false church. When an infamous local wastrel discovers the truth, he's unable to sway the people because of his lowly reputation. Yeon's gritty social commentary offers no easy answers — and once again it has early audiences abuzz.

Contact Finecut

The Pirates (working title)

Director Lee Seok-hoon

Cast Kim Nam-gil, Son Ye-jin

Period actioners are popular across Asia, but this title takes the bankable genre out on the high seas. A maritime adventure set in the 14th-century Joseon Kingdom, the film follows a charismatic soldier-turned-pirate facing off against a tyrannical Captain Soma to score a kingly booty. The project is just waiting to be branded "the Korean *Pirates of the Caribbean*."

Contact Lotte Entertainment

The Face Reader

Director Han Jae-rim

Cast Song Kang-ho, Lee Jung-jae

Still on release domestically, *The Face Reader* is already the fourth highest grossing film in Korean box office history with nearly 8.5 million admissions and counting. Set during the Joseon Kingdom era, the film follows the story of Nae-kyung, a man with

the gift to be able to tell a person's fate from reading their facial features. Favored by the King because of his unique talent, Nae must protect the royal lineage when tragedy and intrigue befall the royal court. Stars Song (*Snowpiercer*) and Lee (*The Thieves*) are two of the most in-demand actors working in the Korean film industry today.

Contact Showbox/Mediaplex

The Spy: Undercover Operation

Director Lee Seung-jun

Cast Sol Kyung-gu, Daniel Henney

This romantic spy-versus-terrorist caper features Sol as a skilled intelligence agent Chul-soo, who can pull off effortless negotiations with everyone but his wife, played by Moon So-ri. She believes he's a boring, underpaid white-collar stiff, until she finds herself kidnapped by a wanted terrorist and her husband reveals his true vocation to save her — and the country. In addition to Sol, star of 2009's *Haeundae* — one of the biggest hits in Korean cinema history — the project is likely to generate sales buzz thanks to A-list heartthrobs Henney (*My Father*) and Moon (*Oasis*).

Contact CJ Entertainment

Marriage Blue

Director Hong Ji-young

Cast Ok Taec Yeon, Lee Yeon-hee

Marking the big screen debut of Ok, a member of the internationally popular K-pop band 2pm, *Marriage Blue* has built-in market potential. The raucous rom-com explores how various troubled couples cope with the prospect of marriage a week before their weddings. Surprise divorcees, handsome strangers, sexy Uzbek wives-to-be and sudden pregnancies all contribute to the matrimonial melee.

Contact M-Line **THR**

INDIESTORY INC.

ASIAN FILM MARKET 2013 BEXCO F12



BUSAN International Film Festival

KOREAN CINEMA TODAY – PANORAMA



FESTIVAL SCREENING

5(Sat) 14:00 MBT3
6(Sun) 19:00 CS
7(Mon) 13:00 M8,9
8(Tue) 13:00 M6,7
10(Thu) 20:00 COMC

IF YOU WERE ME 6

Directed by PARK Jung-bum, SHIN A-ga, LEE Sang-cheol, MIN Yongkeun

2013 Asian Film Market Premiere



MY DEAR GIRL, JIN-YOUNG

Directed by Andrew LEE



STRANGERS ON THE FIELD

Directed by KIM Myeong-joon

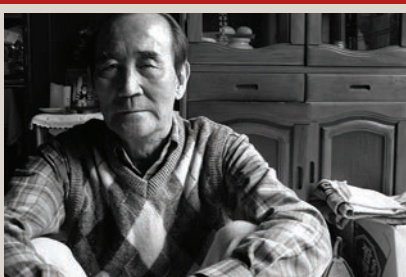
In Post-production



CHEER UP, MR. LEE

Directed by LEE Byeong-heon

Audience Award, Seoul Independent FF,
Jeonju IFF, Indieforum



MY FATHER'S EMAILS

Directed by HONG Jae-hee

Women Make Waves FF, EBS Int'l Documentary FF
Critic's Forum Choice Prize, Muju Sangol FF,
Best Film Award, Seoul Independent FF



ANXIETY

Directed by MIN Hwan-ki

Vision du Reel Documentary FF,
Best Documentary Award, Busan IFF



THE RING OF LIFE

Directed by LEE Jin-hyuk

Seoul Independent FF, EBS Int'l Documentary FF

Korean Independent Film Production and Distribution Company

INDIESTORY

For further inquiries, please contact Kay KWAK (kay@indiestory.com)

Rithy Panh

Busan's Asia Filmmaker of the Year discusses his Cannes award winner *The Missing Picture*, surviving the Khmer Rouge and how films are like memories

By Patrick Brzeski

CAPPING OFF AN acclaimed year, Cambodian director Rithy Panh is the Busan International Film Festival's Asia Filmmaker of the Year for 2013. The 50-year-old auteur has won numerous plaudits for his documentary work chronicling the 1970s Khmer Rouge genocide, an atrocity he endured firsthand — losing his entire family to starvation and forced labor — before he escaped to Thailand and, later, France, where he discovered filmmaking.

This year, Panh's latest film and 12th feature, *The Missing Picture*, won the top prize in the Cannes Film Festival's *Un Certain Regard* sidebar. The film's wholly original aesthetic uses unanimated clay figurines depicting Panh and his family's plight, set against previously unscreened archival footage from the Pol Pot era. Shortly after Cannes, Panh launched Memory! — Asia's first cinema-heritage festival in Phnom Penh — through the Bophana audio-visual archive and media center he established there in 2006.

Panh spoke with *The Hollywood Reporter* about answering the unanswerable questions of genocide, why access to one's local cinema is central to cultural identity, and how film festival prizes offer protection to the great directors of the developing world.

What's it like returning to painful memories during your

filmmaking process?

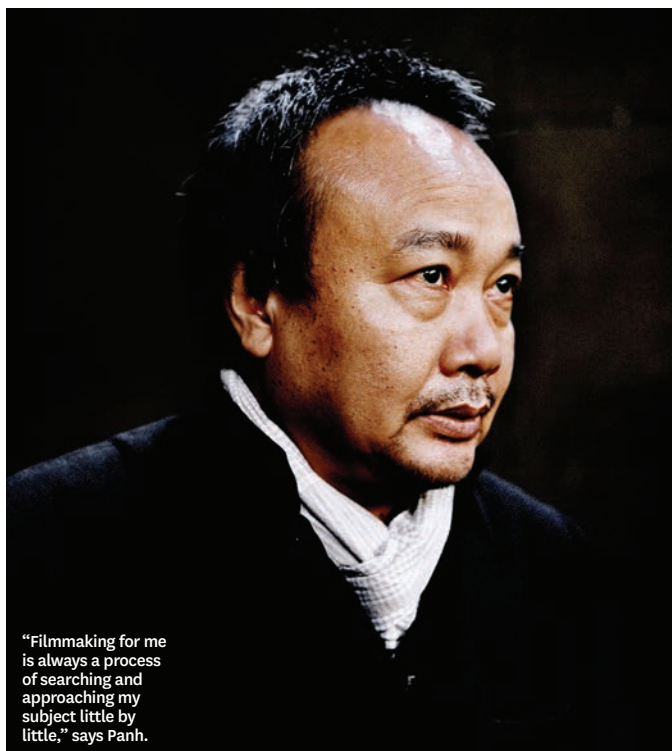
Sometimes one film is like many movies put together, and other times a collection of films has the logic of memories about a single subject. I cannot answer all of the questions that genocide asks of us. But I try to provide some response. If you watch *S21: The Khmer Rouge Death Machine* (2003) and then you see *Duch, Master of the Forges of Hell* (2012) and after that you can watch, *The Missing Picture* — hopefully, gradually, you can begin to understand a little bit better.

What did your win at the Cannes Film Festival mean to you?

Oh well, it's pretty great for me and my team, right? (Laughs) But it's also great for Cambodia, because it shows our young Cambodian directors that making film is a viable path. There's another important side to these festivals that often gets overlooked. It's not only about the stars and glamour. For many African and Asian filmmakers working in countries where democracy does not accord the same rights as in, say, the U.S., France or Germany, life and simply doing your work is not easy. When the big festivals — like

VITAL STATS

Nationality Cambodian
Born April 18, 1964
Film in Busan
The Missing Picture
Selected Filmography
Rice People, (1994), *S-21: The Khmer Rouge Killing Machine* (2003), *The Burnt Theater* (2005), *Shiiku* (2011), *The Missing Picture* (2013)



"Filmmaking for me is always a process of searching and approaching my subject little by little," says Panh.

Cannes, Toronto and Busan — give their awards, they're giving directors something almost like diplomatic protection. They're saying: don't touch him; let him make his movies; this work is important. If the country interferes, the world will surely protest. I try to speak about Jafar Panari, who is under house arrest in Iran, every chance I have. We must remember Panari's everyday struggle to live as an artist — here, at festivals, it's particularly important to fight for him.

How do you balance your filmmaking with your work at Bophana?

I split my time. Fifty percent I keep for my own work, and 50 percent I keep for Bophana, where I work as a volunteer. Unfortunately, this means I have to turn down some festival appearances, because the traveling takes a lot of time and I want to be teaching and support young Cambodian directors. I'd prefer to send them to festivals to see great movies and meet directors.

Why did you decide to establish Bophana as an archive, rather

than say, a film school?

In Cambodia, where there was such destruction, the Khmer Rouge did not only kill our people but they destroyed our cultural heritage. Most of our early films have disappeared or been destroyed. So we are working to save whatever sounds, images and films of early Cambodia that we can — and trying to create free access for the young people of the country. You cannot build a cultural identity without the images and sounds of your culture. Film is also a memory — of the character and imagination of a culture.

What's an example of something Bophana has made accessible to Cambodia?

We recently produced a CD called "Forgotten Songs." It's Cambodian music from a century ago. These songs could never be heard today in Cambodia. But we discovered a book in a French archive written by an ethnomusicologist at the turn of the century. This was entirely lost music. Now it is with us again and people love it. They are very proud to discover their heritage. **THR**

No.1 in Taiwan box office for 4 consecutive weeks!
Box office accumulated more than USD 10 M



BUSAN
International
Film Festival

Official Selection - Open Cinema

MARKET SCREENING
**TODAY &
TOMORROW**

7th Oct (Mon) 17:30

@ LOTTE CINEMA Centum City 10

8th Oct (Tue) 17:30

@ LOTTE CINEMA Centum City 10

Festival Screening

9th Oct (Wed) 20:00 @ BIFF Theater

10th Oct (Thu) 13:00 @ CGV Centum City Starium

11th Oct (Fri) 20:00 @ MEGABOX Haeundae 7

ZONE PRO SITE

THE
CHEN YU-HSUN
FILM
**MOVEABLE
FEAST.**

LIN MEI-HSIU

YO YANG

KIMI HSIA

REVIEWS



Transit

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

working environment belies her constant fear of being deported for having overstayed her expired work visa; then comes her boyfriend Moises (Ping Medina), who is working against the odds to keep his son from being deported under a new law that requires the children of immigrant workers

to leave Israel.

These two episodes, alongside the third one about newly-arrived young maid Tina (Mercedes Cabral), retread many an anecdote already familiar to the Philippines' OFW (Overseas Filipino Workers) films. Espia flirts with the melodramatic visual and narrative tropes of that subgenre, and in the early scenes the film betrays its flaws.

But the further Espia goes down the age ladder, the better *Transit* becomes. The film gradually brings the five lives onto the same narrative map, with two of the children — four-year-old Joshua (Marc Justine Alvarez), and teenage Yael (Jasmine Curtis-Smith) — making uncertain steps toward their own multicultural futures. Yael embarks on a romance with a local boy while Joshua gleefully studies the *Torah* under the aegis of his father's employer. With the boy eventually pondering his future in the Bangkok airport, *Transit* attains a level of contemplation and visual stillness that works well with its title, with Espia channeling the melancholy of in-betweeners without the usual histrionics.

New Currents

Cast Irma Adlawan, Ping Medina, Mercedes Cabral, Jasmine Curtis-Smith, Marc-Justine Alvarez

Director Hannah Espia // 92 minutes

Letters From The South

Six Southeast Asian filmmakers explore the region's relationship to China, with mixed results BY CLARENCE TSUI

Letters are only meaningful when they are meant to be two-way communication — and the significance of the six shorts in the omnibus film *Letters from the South* could be gauged by their abilities to contemplate the ever-shifting relationship between the Chinese diaspora ("the South") and China (the roots in "the North"). Posting a mix of melancholic and comic questions, this Malaysian-produced portmanteau offers substance rendered in a range of styles, and will inevitably be of interest to film programs examining either China or migration issues.

The six shorts can be roughly divided into three groups: the first pair, Aditya Assarat's *Now Now Now* and Midi Z's *Burial Clothes* sees different generations casting glances northwards. Assarat's Thai-Chinese schoolgirl reflects on how her mainland Chinese cousin has transformed herself from a shy nobody into her current alluring, artistic

self; for the Myanmar-Chinese director Z, it's all about the hopes of returning home, as a granddaughter helps realize his grandfather's final wishes by bringing the funereal attire he left in his ancestral village back to China.

Meanwhile, Singaporeans Sun Koh and Royston Tan offer tales closer to home. The former's *New New Panda* uses a pending Chinese takeover of a Singaporean radio station to reflect on how one of its veteran production staffers positions himself culturally; the latter's *Popiah* looks at how kinship is fostered through traditional cooking.

The final two episodes are leaps into fantasy. In a whirl of quick edits of nocturnal images in the titular Malaysian city, Tan Chui Mui's *A Night in Malacca* reflects on the possibility of revisiting the nostalgic sentiments of exiled Chinese writer Yu Dafu as he describes how memories subside in the tropical Southeast Asian heat.



At least Tan's conversing with someone or something with her entry; the same can't be said of Malaysian-born Tsai Ming-liang's *Walking on Water*, which is nothing more than a love letter to his hometown of Kuching. It's a shame the film ends with a letdown since what comes before comprises a contemplative collection of affecting migrant tales.

A Window on Asian Cinema

Cast Lee Kang-sheng, Lulu Huang, Wu Xeri

Directors Aditya Assarat, Royston Tan, Midi Z, Sun Koh, Tan Chui Mui, Tsai Ming-liang // 105 minutes



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VP of International Film
Financing & Production,
CJ Entertainment,
South Korea

Kim Min Ki
Producer of Miracle
in Cell No. 7,
South Korea

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& Producer, India

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IT'S WHERE YOU NEED TO BE

Clydecynic

Ramiro Belanger's feature debut doesn't break new ground, but it covers the familiar territory astutely

BY ELIZABETH KERR



Weiner plays a man slowly coming unhinged.

There's something non-confrontationally Canadian about the central character of Ramiro Belanger's *Clydecynic*, a Guy Madden-esque study of a young man's increasingly destructive rage and the fallout of keeping it bottled up.

Twenty-year-old Clyde Nelson (Alex Weiner) is a mealy-mouthed, self-trained hypnotist working for a combination ponzi scheme, inspirational speaking outfit brilliantly called 'Take the Power Keep the Power.' His meek nature is no surprise given that he still lives at home with his abusive father, Elijah (Mark Krupa). But work is another story, where Clyde is charming and inspirational — and a cash cow. His bosses disagree about his value: the

face of Power, Dion (Richard Zeman) sympathizes with Clyde's difficult life, co-founder Wayne (Francis JR. Gould) thinks he's unstable and dangerous. As Clyde's familial dysfunction pushes him closer and closer toward a total meltdown, a young woman comes to him for help finding and keeping her power, and she's the catalyst that proves Clyde's toxicity.

Shot in hard black and white, *Clydecynic* would be experimental if it didn't have a fairly conventional narrative. The entire film rests on Clyde's unraveling, and when his abuse manifests as therapy and he starts taking out his anger on his clients, narrative is cast aside in favor of watching his downward spiral. Editor-writer-director

Belanger gets in tight and the camera doesn't allow for glancing away. Explorations of explosive rage are nothing new, but Clyde is aware that he's a hazard and he might like it; it's hard to tell when Clyde is being genuine, even at his most traumatized.

Bleak as *Clydecynic* can be at times, there are some moments of wry levity — Clyde's empowerment speech and a co-worker's idea for how to use pins among them, and the casting is almost perfect. Weiner's big doe eyes and baby face make his

descent into violence all the more disturbing, and Zeman has the new-agey self-help presence of a hybrid of Mr Clean and Anthony Robbins. If there's a fault, it's Krupa, who's saddled with a character so heinous it actually makes him seem less monstrous, as it's the shadings of humanity that always make abusers so horrifying.

Flash Forward

Cast Alex Weiner, Mark Krupa, Richard Zeman

Director Ramiro Belanger
86 minutes

Yellow Colt

A story of a boy and his horse exploits Mongolia's natural beauty but not much else

BY ELIZABETH KERR

The beautifully barren Mongolian plains are the setting for Khoroldjorj Choijoovanchig's debut feature, *Yellow Colt*, an underwhelming tale of a runaway colt and the young boy that rides him to a racing victory. Not quite a coming of age story and not quite about the pains of loss and identity, the film sits on the fence between overly artistic drivel and painfully mainstream uplift.

Pre-teen Galt (Narankhuu Bayarkhuu) returns to his nomadic family after the uncle that adopted him dies, leaving him no choice but to return to his so-called motherland. After a period of adjustment, he learns

to get on with his parents, particularly dad Badam (Tserenbold Tsegmid), and older brother Tomor. At the same time Badam is preparing his herd of horses for a vaguely prestigious Naadam race contested among the surrounding herders. Galt takes an instant shine to a wild yellow colt that wanders into the pack one day, and asks his brother to help him train the animal for the upcoming race. The horse is considered a good omen, and sure enough Galt



Young Bayarkhuu develops a bond with a wild horse.

wins. Other than a minor rivalry between Badam and another herder who wants the horse, or just doesn't want Badam to have it, that's the extent of the action.

Yellow Colt is kindhearted and well intentioned, and taken together that also equates to dull. The performances are defined by wistful gazing and mournful stares, and plenty of time is devoted to horses running in slow motion against the vast Mongolian grasslands. Tack on a distracting soundtrack fit for an inspirational Lifetime movie and a racing refrain reminiscent of a 1960s television western, and the result is an unassuming story that sadly flirts with camp rather than yields rousing results.

A Window on Asian Cinema

Cast Narankhuu Bayarkhuu, Damdin Sambuunyam, Tserenbold Tsegmid

Director Khoroldjorj Choijoovanchig
91 minutes

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Li Wan, left, works hard to impress her father.

Einstein and Einstein

It's not easy growing up female in contemporary China in Cao Baoping's bittersweet family drama

BY ELIZABETH KERR

A 13-year-old middle school girl struggles with exclusion and lowered expectations in *Einstein and Einstein*, a critical but bloated look at coming of age female in modern China. Cao Baoping's empathetic film is a modest one that takes its sweet time getting to where it's going, but it's filled with small moments that add up to a moderately insightful condemnation of hundreds of years of child rearing, even if it's a familiar argument. Anchored by a strong performance from its young star Sophie, *Einstein and Einstein* is the kind of contemporary drama that connects because of its relevance and resonance, as well as working as a peek inside modern urban China.

Li Wan (Sophie) is an only daughter until middle school when her father's second wife gives birth to a son. Long before she's shuffled off to live with her grandparents, Li Wan is kept in the dark about the boy's existence altogether and suspects nothing when her distant father starts showering her with gifts, one of which is a puppy that Li Wan initially rejects (and treats horribly). Of course, the dog wins her over and a tight bond forms, and of course, the dog is ripped from her life. To describe Li Wan's ordeal with the dog as symbolic of larger family issues is an understatement. The dog, Einstein, also serves as the final, gruesome symbol of just how desperate Li Wan is for her dad's approval and affection.

It's miserable stuff, but Cao leaves room for a happy ending that suggests the modernization of China is an iterative process that will trickle down to the Li Wans of the world — eventually.

A Window on Asian Cinema

Cast Sophie, Zhang Xueying, Guo Jinglin

Director Cao Baoping

No rating, 119 minutes

Sarikend

A sense of Kiarostami *déjà vu* permeates this comic drama revolving around the now well-worn subject of urban dwellers lost in the countryside

BY CLARENCE TSUI

Young Iranian filmmakers have long complained about forever living in Abbas Kiarostami's shadow, but Mehdi Parizad's premise for his first feature-length film is simply inviting viewers to revisit such comparisons.

Mirroring the auteur's 1999 film *The Wind Will Carry Us* — in which an impatient production team gets increasingly sucked into rural life as they await the death of a local woman — *Sarikend* parachutes a TV commercial crew into the Iranian-Turkish borderlands, their plans of making a sunflower oil commercial constantly thwarted by the director's seemingly unrealistic artistic vision.

By padding this main story with a parallel thread about how a widely-transmitted tragic-romantic folk tale might be a reworked version of the real life of one of the villagers, Parizad has also ventured into Kiarostami's long-running contemplations of the divergence of reality and fiction (à la *Through the Olive Trees*). Failing to offer a substantial or innovative advancement of these issues — not to mention that Parizad's potentially ravishing mise-en-scene is undermined by sub-par Digi-Beta imagery — *Sarikend's* lifespan, even in terms of festivals and specialist programs, looks bleak beyond Busan.

At the center of *Sarikend* is Farhad (Farough Mazloomi), a jaded TV commercial director who arrives at the village with a bad attitude about the



A producer in Iran has high hopes for his commercial about sunflowers.

trivial commission he has to undertake.

His dismay after failing to realize his original filming plans — he had wanted to depict sunflowers turning skywards at dawn — is heightened by the fact that his affections for his producer are not returned.

His stifled desire is made to contrast that of Morad, the grumpy Turkish-born janitor who shares more than just the name of a legend about a man being robbed of his fiancée and then killed by a gendarme. But with much of the film generating either a sense of *déjà vu* or hand-wringing passivity, the multiple threads of the story are never really given a chance to generate emotional currency — for both characters and viewers.

New Currents

Cast Farough Mazloomi, Fathali Feizi, Farid Kashkuli

Director Mehdi Parizad

74 minutes

Pascha

A finely etched portrait of a woman living an unconventional but largely fulfilling life

BY ELIZABETH KERR

Women who try to buck the Korean social order and go their own way have been the subject of countless dramas in the past, but Ahn Seon-kyoung's *Pascha* is one of the most memorable of its ilk. Featuring one of the most finely observed female characters in recent memory (in a cinema that could use less machismo), as well as one of the most disturbing single images, *Pascha* starts strong but an overwhelming and muddled third act is what lingers.

Forty-ish budding screenwriter and cat owner Gaeul (Kim So-hee) feeds the neighborhood strays, doesn't eat meat and is living with her 17-year-old lover. In itself none of that is remarkable, but this is contemporary Korea, where that cocktail

of unacceptable behaviors is social suicide. Her boyfriend Joseph (Sung Ho-jun) is a high school dropout working a dead-end delivery service job and hasn't even completed his mandatory military service. Despite being outcasts and broke, the pair seem truly happy.

Ahn's feminine touch brings a healthy dose of reality to *Pascha* and in the film's first half it is her eye for simple intimacies (a shared bath, reading from a diary) that make Gaeul and Joseph's relationship recognizable. Kim and So's dynamic is refreshingly unfussy and sweet, and Ahn allows it to play out organically within her largely still frames. But this is also a melodrama and eventually tragedy strikes and Ahn heaps punishment



Kim and Sung share a moment of intimacy.

after punishment on Gaeul. An unplanned pregnancy almost undoes the lovers; it definitely undoes the film. Gaeul's decision to have an abortion may have been intended as a stark portrayal of an agonizing event, but *Pascha* steps over the line with a graphic and disturbing post-D&C sequence that flirts with vehement anti-abortion propaganda.

Kim does a lot to save what emotional goodwill Ahn nearly destroys with a moving and nuanced performance. There's a

slight disconnect in that Gaeul lives an "alternative" lifestyle but resists complete rebellion when confronted by her family. That is, however, admittedly a common enough pattern in Korea. And though the film resolves on an upbeat note, it's hard to banish it's earlier, needlessly sensational moments.

New Currents

Cast Kim So-hee, Sung Ho-jun, Shin Yeon-sook

Director Ahn Seonkyoung
97 minutes

The Terror Live

Kim Byung-woo's first mainstream blockbuster chronicles an anchorman's struggle to contend with the increasingly bloody acts perpetuated by a mysterious caller BY CLARENCE TSUI

Director Kim Byung-woo's *The Terror Live* is a ceaselessly hectic piece about a newsman's struggle to regain control in a battle of wits with a caller threatening to unleash total chaos in Seoul with bombs and destruction, but also the other players — bosses, detectives, government officials — who are all trying to make a puppet out of him.

Journalist Yoon Young-hwa (Ha Jung-woo from *The Yellow Sea*), is a jaded, recently-divorced hack plying his trade as a radio talk-show host after being sacked from his high-flying job as an anchorman at one of the country's most established broadcasters. As the film begins, his life seems to be picking up again: having managed to

contact and then conduct a running conversation with a man who has just blown up one of Seoul's main bridges.

Yoon's excitement about this potentially career-rejuvenating break is soon dampened by a gradual realization of how little control he has over the situation. His arrogant plan to turn this



Ha stumbles upon the story of a lifetime.

mysterious bomber-caller into a character in a ratings-boosting melodrama is swiftly blown to bits, as Yoon discovers his ex-wife is in mortal danger and his personal safety inside the studio is at risk. As the police, the government and his employers drag him in different directions by getting Yoon to speak the lines they have drafted for him, he gradually comes to the realization that the powers are simply pursuing petty self interest amid the most harrowing of circumstances.

Ha's performance does justice to this character with moral complications. By gradually upping the dosages of anxiety and doubt into Yoon's smug veneer, the actor manages to portray a man quickly losing his moorings but having to at least pretend he's putting up a good fight.

Open Cinema

Cast Ha Jung-woo, Lee Kyung-young

Director Kim Byeong-woo //100 minutes

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